

# USDA Rural Development Quarterly Review

Editor: Kelly Utter

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Committed to the future of rural communities.

## USDA Rural Development Launches New Brand

*Committed to the Future of Rural Communities*

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development has launched a new initiative to better communicate its mission and goals to Wisconsin citizens and across the country: *USDA Rural Development – Committed to the Future of Rural Communities*.

“USDA Rural Development has changed names and programs over the past decade to the point that people have lost an understanding about our services,” said State Director Frank Frassetto. “We are confident that this new identity and renewed outreach effort will give residents throughout rural Wisconsin a clear understanding about our organization and the technical and financial resources we offer.”

The new logo depicts a typical rural landscape, complete with a water tower and a mix of buildings all nestled in a rolling green hillside. The new tagline, *Committed to the Future of Rural Communities*, will help the agency communicate who we are and what we do for people and their communities. “This brand is more than just a new logo and tagline,” said Frassetto. “It is a commitment by everyone in our organization to fully serve our rural communities by helping to build economic opportunities and a better quality of life now and for future generations.”

Over the next several months, USDA Rural Development will continue its outreach efforts across Wisconsin.

## USDA Rural Development Acknowledges Lending Partners in Wisconsin

The United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development State Director, Frank Frassetto announced the recipients of the annual Rural Development Million Dollar Lender Awards to over 44 financial institutions and individual loan officers throughout the state of Wisconsin (WI).

The Million Dollar Lender Award recognizes Rural Development lending partners who have played a significant role in the success of Rural Development’s Guaranteed Rural Housing (GRH) Loan program in WI. Awardees have utilized in excess of \$1 million of GRH program funds in Fiscal Year (FY) 2003, in financing home purchases for local residents.

“Rural Development and lenders across the State are committed to providing the financial resources to assist rural Wisconsin families obtain homeownership,” said Frassetto. “Partnering together is a great way to leverage our resources to meet the challenges put forth by the Bush Administration to increase homeownership in rural America,” he added.

In FY 2003, \$103 million in GRH funds assisting nearly 1,600 WI families become homeowners who might not otherwise have had the opportunity. This represents a 73 percent increase in GRH funds utilized in WI in 2002 and 2004 is proving to be another successful year. With over \$3 billion available nationwide, expectations are that WI Rural Development and its approved lenders will again exceed their outstanding performance of the previous year.

“The real story behind our success are the partner organizations that help Rural Development deliver the programs that benefit Wisconsin’s rural residents. For instance Jon Roventini, account executive for Chase Manhattan Mortgage Corporation, is the recipient of WI Rural Development’s “Valued Partner” Award. Last year Chase Manhattan originated \$28 million in GRH loans assisting over 280 Wisconsin residents in achieving their dreams of homeownership,” said Frassetto. “We value all our partnerships and are proud to recognize the recipients of today’s awards among the elite group of “Million Dollar Lenders”. Today we acknowledge not only their contribution to our success, but also honor their commitment to the residents of their community, in providing affordable homeownership opportunities created through our GRH program.”

A list of all award recipients can be found on our website at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/wi/programs/rhs/grh/million>

## WHAT'S INSIDE:

### Pg 2: 2004 Earth Day Celebration

Wisconsin Business Bank 1st in State  
Second Year Running

### Pg 3: LifeQuest Receives Certificate of Achievement

Jon Roventini of Chase Manhattan Mortgage  
Corporation, Receives Valued Partner Award

### Pg 4: Waushara County's Cooperative Care Program Places as Finalist For Prestigious Innovations in American Government Award



## 2004 Earth Day Celebration USDA Rural Development Wisconsin

April 22, 2004

### St. Croix Chippewa Indians of WI Check Presentation

In observance of Earth Day 2004, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development has selected the St. Croix Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin as a funding recipient.

Frank Frassetto, State Director for USDA Rural Development in Wisconsin announced that a total of \$930,000 in a low interest loan and almost \$2.5 million in grants will be awarded to the St. Croix Chippewa Indian Tribe to replace sewer mains and construct a new treatment facility.

Rural Development representatives joined tribal leaders and members of the St. Croix Chippewa Indian Tribe for a special Earth Day event on the St. Croix Reservation. Brian Deaner, Wisconsin Area Director for Rural Development, presented Tribal Chairman, David Merrill, with a large check representing the loan and grants combination that has been awarded by USDA Rural Development.

"The St. Croix Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin was selected for Earth Day recognition because of the impact it will have towards a cleaner environment and better quality of life for residents on the St. Croix Reservation when the project is completed," said Deaner. "The initiative of the Tribal leaders and members of the St. Croix Chippewa is an important contribution to a cleaner environment now and for generations to come."

The new treatment plant and sewer lines will serve 641 residential and commercial users on the St. Croix Reservation. This new system will replace the current failing private and tribal systems and help to end area groundwater pollution.

USDA Rural Development serves as the lead Federal entity for rural development needs administering over \$219 million dollars annually to rural Wisconsin communities. Funding is used to support housing, business development, infrastructure, community facilities, and technical assistance needs. Rural Development's mission is to deliver programs in a way that will support increasing economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for rural residents. For more information about the Wisconsin USDA Rural Development programs, visit their website at [www.rurdev.usda.gov/wi](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/wi).



Check Presentation

### Wisconsin Business Bank 1st in State Second Year Running

For the Second year in a row Wisconsin Business Bank, headquartered in Sheboygan, was the first in the State and fourth in the Nation for USDA Rural Development Business & Industry Loans for the 2003 Fiscal Year.

According to recently released U.S. Government data, Wisconsin Business Bank originated over \$24,600,000 in Business & Industry Guaranteed Loans during the past fiscal year, more than any other Wisconsin based institution. The data was compiled by the Colman Report, the SBA Lender's Industry Information Source.

Wisconsin Business Bank is one of the fastest growing banks in the state. Founded in 1999, the bank is a full service bank, focusing on providing depository and lending services to businesses less than 500 employees covering Wisconsin, Minnesota, Northern Illinois, Upper and Lower Michigan.

*(Excerpt for article appearing in the March Wisconsin Business Bank Newsletter)*

## **LifeQuest Receives Certificate of Achievement From USDA Rural Development at Grand Opening Celebration**

U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development Public Information Specialist, Kelly Utter, joined LifeQuest representatives, local leaders and members of the Wautoma community for open house activities and dedication ceremony Saturday April 24, 2004, to celebrate the completion of the new LifeQuest medical services facility.

USDA Rural Development presented LifeQuest with a Certificate of Achievement commending them for their initiative and commitment to the expansion of economic opportunities and the vitality of the communities they serve.

“The U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development is proud to be a partner in the growth and expansion of LifeQuest and Community Health Network, and the public/private partnership that allows for an expansion of opportunity and the sharing of the economic risks,” said Utter.

“By working together and maximizing our resources, we can insure greater opportunities and a sustainable economy for generations to come.”

USDA Rural Development approved a \$750,000 Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan through the Business-Cooperative Programs mission area in September 2002. The loan funds were used to aid in the construction of the new facility. The new center houses two businesses, LifeQuest and Community Health Network (CHN) Rehabilitation services. Life Quest is a premier billing, collection and data management service for over 80 ambulance services in Wisconsin and Iowa. CHN Rehabilitation provides physical, occupational and speech therapy services in its new 2,000 square foot gymnasium.

This project has helped save 20 jobs in the Wautoma area and has created three new jobs. Both LifeQuest and Community



## **Jon Roventini of Chase Manhattan Mortgage Corporation, Receives Valued Partner Award From USDA Rural Development**



The U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development Wisconsin State Director, Frank Frassetto presented Jon Roventini, account executive for Chase Manhattan Mortgage Corporation, with the “Valued Partner” Award on Tuesday April 20th, in Wausau, WI.

The Rural Development “Valued Partner Award” is an annual award that recognizes the lender and their lending institution who played a significant role in the success of Rural Development’s Guaranteed Rural Housing (GRH) Loan program in WI by originating an extraordinary amount of GRH program funds during the past Fiscal Year. During Fiscal Year 2003 Mr. Roventini and Chase Manhattan Mortgage Corporation originated \$28 million in GRH loans, assisting over 280 Wisconsin residents in achieving their dreams of homeownership.

“The real story behind our success are our partner organizations like Chase Manhattan, that help Rural Development deliver the programs that benefit Wisconsin’s rural residents,” said Frassetto. “Mr. Roventini and Chase Manhattan have been excellent partners for us and that partnership has resulted in opening new doors for first time homebuyers in Wisconsin. We honor their commitment and dedication to the residents in the communities they serve, in providing affordable homeownership opportunities created through our GRH program.”

In FY 2003, \$103 million in GRH funds assisting nearly 1,600 WI families become homeowners who might not otherwise have had the opportunity. This represents a 73 percent increase in GRH funds utilized in WI in 2002 and 2004 is proving to be another successful year. With over \$3 billion available nation wide, expectations are that WI Rural Development and its approved lenders will again exceed their outstanding performance of the previous year.





## WAUSHARA COUNTY'S COOPERATIVE CARE PROGRAM PLACES AS FINALIST FOR PRESTIGIOUS INNOVATIONS IN AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AWARD

*Unique, worker-owned cooperative empowers home care workers; eligible for \$100,000 prize*

Representing a radical change in the delivery of home care services, Waushara County's Cooperative Care has been named one of 15 finalists for the highly esteemed Innovations in Government Award, a program of the Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. The

program is now eligible to win \$100,000 in what is often referred to as "the Oscars" of government award programs.

The Waushara County Department of Human Services, in Wisconsin, facilitated development of the co-op in 1999 in an effort to strengthen and expand its home care workforce by transferring management of the service from the county to the providers.

With guidance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development, and other organizations, the providers created a business plan reflecting their wishes for decent pay and benefits. Cooperative Care was officially launched in 2001 by 52 workers who voted to incorporate, paid dues and elected a board of directors.

Today, with 84 members, Cooperative Care is fulfilling the mission of its founding members by providing the county's home care workers with fair pay and benefits through a business they democratically own and operate themselves. The best aspect of this program is that it gives this once-disenfranchised group of workers a voice on the job.

"Like many states across the nation, Wisconsin faces a shortage of home health providers," said Gowher Rizvi, Director of the Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at

Harvard University. "This program is a great example of how creative thinking – when it comes to providing public services – can benefit both workers and the people they serve."

A 2002 client survey found that Cooperative Care is meeting its goals. An average of 96 percent of the respondents reported satisfaction in all aspects of the care they receive. Workers have benefited with higher wages, paid time off, holiday pay and health insurance.

Cooperative Care was one of nearly 1,000 applicants for the 2004 Innovations in American Government Award. Each of the 15 finalists will deliver a public presentation before the National Selection Committee at Harvard University on May 12, 2004. For more information about the presentations and how to view them on the Internet, please visit [www.ashinstitute.harvard.edu](http://www.ashinstitute.harvard.edu). After a full day of presentations the committee will select five winners, which will be announced on July 28, 2004 at the Excellence in Government 2004 Conference, in Washington, DC. Each winning program will receive a \$100,000 grant to encourage replication of its innovation in other jurisdictions.

The Innovations in American Government Awards program, now in its 17<sup>th</sup> year, is a program of the Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.

The award is administered in partnership with the Council for Excellence in Government.



***For more information on the Innovations in American Government program and this year's finalists, please visit [www.ashinstitute.harvard.edu](http://www.ashinstitute.harvard.edu) or [www.excelgov.org](http://www.excelgov.org).***



Committed to the future of rural communities.

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